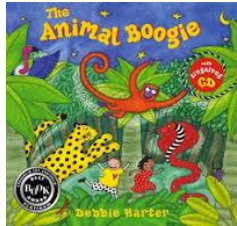


Need a Read-Aloud theme with mystery, drama, great visuals, folktales, current events, science, geography and food? Want opportunities for movement and deep discussions? Take a trip to a tropical rain forest.

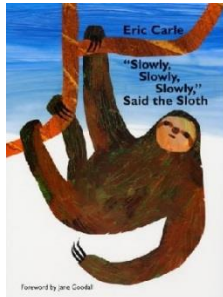
Fiction



The Animal Boogie by Debbie Harter

Ages 3 to 5

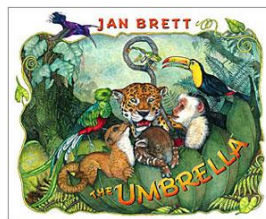
Get the kids moving with this rhyming, repetitive picture book that begs to be acted out. The kids will be shaking, swinging, stomping and flying their way around the jungle.



“Slowly, Slowly, Slowly,” said the Sloth by Eric Carle

Ages 3 to 6

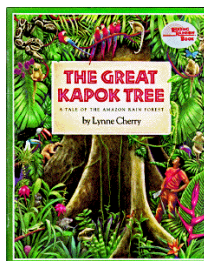
Meet animals of the Amazon rain forest as they wonder about the unusual habits of a sloth. The simple text and Carle’s vibrant cut-paper illustrations will appeal to young kids at your Read-Aloud. This book provides a springboard for discussion about the animals of the rain forest and about synonyms.



The Umbrella by Jan Brett

Ages 5 to 8

What kind of animals will you see in the cloud forest of Costa Rica? Carlos hopes to see a tree frog, a tapir, a monkey and more when he takes his umbrella on a walk into the cloud forest. He leaves it on the ground upside-down to climb a tree to see the animals. While he’s gone, all the animals he hoped to see take shelter in his umbrella until there are too many for it to hold.

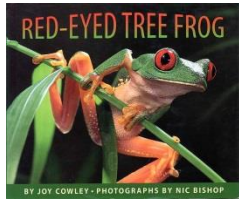


The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry

Ages 8 to 12

When a man falls asleep under a huge tree that he is trying to cut down, animals that depend on the tree whisper in his ear, begging him not to destroy their home. Lynne Cherry’s detailed illustrations are enthralling. A second book by Cherry, *The Shaman’s Apprentice*, explores the natural medicine used by an Amazonian tribe.

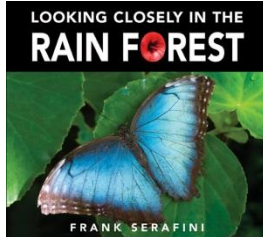
Nonfiction



Red-Eyed Tree Frog by Joy Cowley

Ages 3 to 6

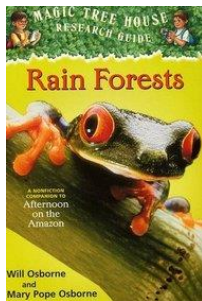
Eye-popping photographs will grab kids' attention in this simple picture book about a tree frog's search for food. Simple text will move you through the story quickly; two pages of detailed information at the end of the book will provide answers to kids' questions.



Looking Closely in the Rain Forest by Frank Serafini

Ages 3 and up

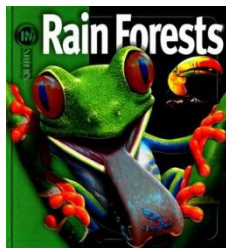
Even big kids will like guessing what rain forest plant or animal is shown in each close-up photograph. This short, interactive book is a great way to either introduce the topic of rain forests to your group or to let them demonstrate their knowledge.



Rain Forests: Magic Tree House Research Guide by Will Osborne and Mary Pope Osborne

Ages 6 to 9

Many kids in your Read-Aloud may know *Afternoon on the Amazon*, part of the Magic Tree House series. This research guide is the nonfiction companion to *Afternoon on the Amazon*, and provides information about the plants and animals of the Amazon. Pair with *Afternoon on the Amazon* for a fun read.



Rain Forests by Richard C. Vogt

Ages 6 to 12

This book explores the plants and animals of the tropical rain forest in great detail. Dynamic photos, illustrations, diagrams and maps enhance each section of the book. Best used with a small group of kids or in a one-on-one situation. This book provides a great opportunity to show how to use an index and section headings to find answers to questions.

More books about the tropical rain forests

Jazzy in the Jungle by Lucy Cousins

Ages 3 to 5

On the Banks of the Amazon/En las orillas del Amazonas by Nancy Kelly Allen

Ages 4 to 6

Amazon Boy by Ted Lewin

Ages 5 to 8

A Walk in the Rainforest/Un Paseo por el Bosque Lluvioso by Kristin Joy Pratt
Ages 5 and up

Fernando's Gift/El Regalo de Fernando by Douglas Keister
Ages 5 to 9

Jabutí the Tortoise: A Trickster Tale from the Amazon by Gerald McDermott
Ages 5 to 9

Breakfast in the Rainforest: A Visit with Mountain Gorillas by Richard Sobol
Ages 10 to 12

Amazon: You Decide How to Survive by David Borgenicht and Hena Khan
Ages 10 to 12

Activities

1. Your group can create a living demonstration of the rain forest and reinforce some vocabulary from the books you've just read. Have the taller kids stand on a row of chairs at the front to represent the trees of the emergent layer. Another row of students stands on the floor in front of them as the trees of the canopy. A third row of students kneels in front of them as the low-growing plants of the understory, while the remaining students lie on the floor to be the plants on the forest floor. Encourage the kids in each layer to name plants and animals that live in their layer. Discuss how much light each layer receives and how plants and animals adapt to little light.
2. Play Rain Forest Simon Says. After you've read books about rain forest animals, make up a Simon Says game using those animals and their movements or sounds. "Simon says, 'Howl like a howler monkey.'" "Simon says, 'Flit like a blue morpho butterfly.'" "Simon says, 'Climb slowly like a sloth.'"
3. Make a kapok tree. Trees are crucial to the rain forest. They make up the emergent layer and the canopy. They create oxygen and provide habitat for countless plants and animals. Encourage the kids to make their own tree and then decorate it with animals that might live there. You will need to bring small paper bags, scissors, glue, colored tissue paper and markers. This website will show you how this works:
<http://pikadillycharm.blogspot.com/2011/11/paper-bag-fall-tree.html>.
4. Make a rain forest in a jar. Bring the tropics to your Read-Aloud by creating terrariums. Growing plants in an enclosed container allows the kids to see the water cycle up close. You will need to bring rocks, potting soil, plants (mosses, ferns and African violets work well) and jars or containers with lids. This website will show you what to do:
<http://hikebloglove.com/2012/05/09/science-and-nature-for-kids-make-a-rainforest-in-a-jar/>.

Conversation Starters

1. Show the kids this graphic of foods (link below) that come from the rain forest. Ask the kids which of these foods they like, how they think they get harvested and brought to stores and restaurants. How would we get these foods if the rain forest were destroyed?
<http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/themes/rainforests/files/rainforestfoodslabels.pdf>
2. Use these rain forest fact cards to get the kids talking about different aspects of the ecosystem and how it is threatened.
<http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/themes/rainforests/files/rainforestsdiyoknow.pdf>
3. Ask the kids “what if?”
 - What if you could be any animal or plant in the rain forest, which one would you choose to be? Why?
 - What if your family moved to live in a tropical rain forest? How would it be different? How would it be the same?
 - What if it was your job to protect the rain forest from being cut down or a specific animal from extinction? What would you do?